

Ontario



Ministry of
Community and
Social Services

Government
Publications

Are you thinking of
*adoption for
your child?*

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Where to seek help

The doctor has confirmed your suspicions that you are pregnant. Your mind is reeling with a hundred questions! “What will I do? Where will I go? Who can I talk to?”

It's important to get help as soon as possible from people who have the professional training to assist you in making the best plan for your unborn child. These people are on the staffs of children's aid societies throughout the province and on the staffs of licensed adoption agencies. Alternatively, if you are convinced adoption is what you want for your child, the adoption can be arranged privately by a person licensed by the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

What can the children's aid society do?

The children's aid wants to help you make the best plan for your child, whether you decide to keep your child or plan adoption. This might mean giving your child temporary foster care while you consider all the alternatives. You would be working with a worker experienced in this field and your wishes would be important. The earlier you consult with the children's aid society, the better, so that the plan is established when your child is born.

Can I change my mind after the birth of the child?

Yes, you can and some people do. The child is your child and you may wish to alter your plan or seek more help. Such an important decision should not be made in a hurry, or under pressure.

How does a child become legally free for adoption?

There are two ways:

1) Parental consent

The parent or parents of the child sign consent to the adoption any time after the child is a full seven days old. This consent must be signed in the presence of an employee of the children's aid society authorized to take such consents. If the father is acknowledging paternity, has lived with the mother or has contributed to the support of the mother, he should sign as well as the mother. Following the signing of the consent, the parents of the child have 21 days in which they can change their minds and withdraw their consent. The withdrawal must be in writing, and can be given to a children's aid society or the court named on the consent form. Whether or not the child is in an adoption home it is then the responsibility of the person placing the child on adoption to return the child to the original parents.

The person arranging the adoption of your child must offer you the opportunity to seek counselling and independent legal advice before you sign the consent. If the parents are under 18 years, then in addition to signing the consent before an authorized employee of a children's aid society, they must also be seen by a representative of the Official Guardian so that all their rights are explained to them, and they fully understand what they are signing. The children's aid or licensee will arrange an appointment with the Official Guardian's representative in your area if necessary.

The children's aid society must witness the consent to adoption regardless of whether the child is placed on adoption by that society or by someone else.

2) Crown wardship

The second way a child is placed on adoption is by having the child made a *ward of the Crown*.

This means the parents of the child would appear before a family court judge who after hearing all the facts could make a child a *ward of the Crown*, committed to the children's aid society. This transfers the responsibility of planning to the children's aid society. If the judge felt the parents were unsure of a plan he might make the child a *society ward* for a short time to give the parents an opportunity to develop a plan. *Society wards* cannot be placed on adoption and the parents can ask to visit the child.

Private licensed adoption agencies

The law provides for the formation of private adoption agencies. They are listed at the end of this pamphlet.

Licensed private adoption

Private adoption can also be arranged by an individual. The private agency or person who plans to place your child on adoption must be licensed by this ministry. Each adoption placement requires the prior approval of this ministry, unless the licensee has a special exemption from the ministry. The licensee must provide a home study of the proposed adoption family and a complete medical and social history of the birth parents of the child, for approval by a director of this ministry. The home study must be done by a social worker authorized by the ministry to perform that function.

The licensee is responsible for arranging for a social worker, who is approved by the ministry, to conduct the adoption home study on the prospective adopting parents. The licensee can also arrange for you to meet with a social worker and discuss your plans and your feelings about them. There is no charge to you for arranging a private adoption.

If you wish to place your baby through a private adoption but do not know of any private agency or

individual licensed in your area, you can request information from the private adoption licensing clerk at the ministry (416-965-0544).

Is private adoption as safe as agency adoption?

The ministry makes every effort to see that these adoptions are handled in a professional way. One difference may be that in a private adoption, only one set of parents might be proposed for your baby. In an agency adoption, the staff can draw from a number of approved homes and select the home which seems to offer the most for a particular child.

Can my child be placed directly into an adoption home from the hospital?

Yes, if the home is approved and it is the agency's policy. However, the child is not officially on adoption until the consents have been signed and the 21-day waiting period has expired. Adopting parents are advised of these rights and must return the child if the consents are withdrawn within the 21 days. Some agencies prefer to delay placement in an adoption home until the 21-day waiting period is over. You can discuss this with your social worker.

What happens if I change my mind after the 21 days have expired?

If the child is in the adoption home legally and appropriate time has expired, you cannot withdraw your consent.

However, if the child has not been placed for adoption then you can go to family court and present your reasons for withdrawing your consent. The judge will hear the evidence and if it is in the best interests of the child, the judge can order the consent withdrawn.

What does a home study mean?

Before a child can be placed in an adoption home, the prospective parents must be interviewed several times by a social worker from the children's aid or by a social worker approved by this ministry to perform that task.

The worker gets to know the prospective parents and must be comfortable with their ability to bring a child up in a loving, congenial home. The prospective parents must be in good physical health, have enough income to ensure the child's future and have the ability to guide the child through the developing years. The prospective parents are informed of all aspects of adoption. They learn how to help the child understand and appreciate that adoption is a good thing.

Will I know anything about the adoptive parents?

You can express your wishes about the kind of home you would like for your child. These will be respected as much as possible within the limitations set out by the Ontario Human Rights Code. You may ask for non-identifying information about the family chosen for your baby. Names and addresses will not be given.

Can I just give my baby to adopting parents myself?

No. It is a criminal offence for any person (including the child's parents) to place a child with anyone for the purpose of adoption. Only a children's aid society or a licensee can do this, unless the child is being placed with his/her grandparents, aunt or uncle or great aunt or great uncle, or is being adopted by his/her step-parent.

It is against the law for you to receive any payment or reward for the placement of your child.

What if my child is handicapped?

This need not be a barrier to adoption. There are many parents who have adopted children with varying degrees of handicap and have provided the child with a loving happy home.

Will I be allowed to see my baby?

The choice is up to you. Most professionals feel that it is better if you see your baby before releasing for adoption. If you don't you may always wonder what the baby looked like and if he or she was healthy.

Who registers the baby's birth?

The law requires the parent to register the child's birth with the Registrar General's Office within 30 days of the birth. Most parents choose to give the baby a full name even if releasing for adoption. Forms are available at the hospital.

Why do I have to give a medical and social history?

It is important that medical and personal information about yourself and your family be on file, together with the reasons for planning adoption for your child. Your own written thoughts and words will mean a great deal to your child in later years, and will help him to accept and understand why he did not grow up with his birth family. It will also answer other big questions he may have, such as what talents, interests or personality traits he may have inherited from you, any physical features he may share with you, what you look like, how tall you are.

When your baby is older, he will want to know about both his parents. Wherever possible, please have the baby's father provide his own family history. If this is not possible, try to provide as much as you can or explain why it is not available.

All the information you provide will be given to the adopting parents, without identifying details, to pass on to your child as he or she grows up. A copy of this information will also be kept on file at the Ministry of Community and Social Services to ensure that it will always be available to your child, if needed.

Will I know when my baby's adoption has been completed?

Yes. If you ask the society or licensee they will inform you when the adoption has been completed.

Whatever you may be considering for your child, adoption or keeping the baby, it may help to talk it over with a social worker who will help you sort out the many concerns you have. In private adoptions you should be making early arrangements with the licensed agency or person who is going to make the adoption placement. The social and medical history and the report of the adoption home study on the family should be in the ministry office as soon as possible before the birth of the baby, so that the application can be processed and approval issued.

Your baby cannot be placed with the prospective adopting parents until the director has given approval. Thus if the material is not received until after the child's birth, there could be delays in the placement.

Regardless of which plan you choose for your baby, your mind will be more at rest if you seek help early in your pregnancy.

When the adoption is finalized does this mean I'll never again be able to see my child?

In Ontario there is an Adoption Disclosure Register* in the office of the adoption coordinator within the ministry. When the adopted child is 18 years old he or she may register with that registry. Forms are available through any children's aid society or directly from the Register.

The child's birth parents may also register after the child is 18. If parent and child are both entered in the Register, then the adoptive parents are asked to give their written consent that the child and the birth parents should have an opportunity to meet. Before they meet, however, counselling from the children's aid society or ministry staff is required. The adoptive parents are advised of the Register during the home study so they will be aware this could happen after the child's 18th birthday.

There is a list of Ontario children's aid societies on the following pages. Also, your local children's aid society is listed in the telephone book. Or contact the Adoption Unit, Ministry of Community and Social Services, Queen's Park, Toronto (416-965-0544).

**The legislation pertaining to the Adoption Disclosure Register is currently under review. Please contact Register if up to date information is needed: Adoption Disclosure Register, Operational Support Branch, 2nd Floor, 700 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario M5G 1Z6*

Children's Aid Societies

Algoma
65 Willow Avenue
Sault Ste. Marie
Ontario P6B 5B1
(705) 949-0162

Brant
Box 774
70 Chatham St. W.
Brantford
Ontario N3T 5R7
(519) 753-8681

Bruce
Box 279
208 Scott St.
Walkerton
Ontario N0G 2V0
(519) 881-1822

Dufferin
Court House
51 Zina St.
Orangeville
Ontario L9W 1E5
(519) 941-1530

Durham
Box 321
200 John St. W.
Oshawa
Ontario L1H 7L3
(416) 433-1551

Elgin & St. Thomas
27 Southwick St.
St. Thomas
Ontario N5R 3R7
(519) 631-1492

Essex
690 Cataraqui St.
Windsor
Ontario N9A 3P1
(519) 252-1171

Essex R.C.
Box 2306
Walkerville P.O.
1700 Assumption St.
Windsor
Ontario N8Y 4S2
(519) 256-3176

Frontenac
329 Johnson St.
Kingston
Ontario K7L 1Y6
(613) 542-7351

Grey
Box 129
715-3rd Ave. E.
Owen Sound
Ontario N4K 5P1
(519) 376-7893

*Haldimand
653 Broad St. W.
Dunnville
Ontario N1A 1T8
(416) 774-7471

Halton
467 Speers Road
Oakville
Ontario L6K 3S4
(416) 844-8211

Hamilton-Wentworth
143 Wentworth St. S.
Hamilton
Ontario L8N 2Z1
(416) 522-1121

Hamilton-Wentworth
Roman Catholic
499 King St. East
Hamilton
Ontario L8N 1E1
(416) 525-2012

*Hastings
Box 186
311 Front St.
Belleville
Ontario K8N 5A2
(613) 962-9291

Huron
46 Gloucester Terrace
Goderich
Ontario N7A 1W7
(519) 524-7356

*Kapuskasing
Box 188
20 Stewart St.
Kapuskasing
Ontario P5N 2Y3
(705) 335-2301

Kawartha-Haliburton
570 Water St.
Peterborough
Ontario K9H 3M8
(705) 743-9751

*Kenora
R.R. #1, Ocean Ave.
Kenora
Ontario P9N 3W7
(807) 468-5508

Kent
Box 157
435 Grand Ave. W.
Chatham
Ontario N7M 5K3
(519) 352-0440

Lambton
171 Kendall St.
Point Edward
Ontario N7V 4G6
(519) 336-0623

Lanark
Box 37
Perth
Ontario K7H 3E2
(613) 267-4200

*Leeds & Grenville
Box 549, R.R. #1
Brockville
Ontario K6V 5V7
(613) 342-0310

Lennox & Addington
41 Dundas St. W.
Napanee
Ontario K7R 1Z5
(613) 354-4724

*London & Middlesex
Box 848, Station B
164 Albert St.
London
Ontario N6A 4Z5
(519) 434-8461

*Muskoka
Box 1200
62 Kimberley
Bracebridge
Ontario P0B 1C0
(705) 645-4426

*Niagara Region
Box 516
311 Geneva St.
St. Catharines
Ontario L2R 6W5
(416) 937-7731

*Nipissing
Box 1035
240 Algonquin Ave.
Suite 300
North Bay
Ontario P1B 8K3
(705) 472-0910

*Norfolk
Box 601
Regional
Administration Bldg.
Simcoe
Ontario N3Y 4M1
(519) 426-4290

*Northumberland
230 Walton St.
Port Hope
Ontario L1A 1P2
(416) 885-8131

Ottawa
1370 Bank St.
Ottawa
Ontario K1H 7Y3
(613) 733-0670

*Oxford
Box 312
92 Light St.
Woodstock
Ontario N4S 7X6
(519) 539-6176

Parry Sound
76 Church St.
Parry Sound
Ontario P2A 1Z1
(705) 746-9354

Peel
10 Peel Centre Drive
Brampton
Ontario L6T 4G4
(416) 791-5151

Perth
Box 278
380 Hibernia St.
Stratford
Ontario N5A 6T1
(519) 271-5290

Porcupine & District
12 Elm Street North
Timmins
Ontario P4N 6A1
(705) 264-4257

Prescott & Russell
P.O. Box 248
173 Old Hwy. 17
Plantagenet
Ontario K0B 1L0
(613) 673-5148

Prince Edward
Box 1510
6 Ross Street
Picton
Ontario K0K 2T0
(613) 476-2765

Rainy River
Box 751
450 Scott St.
Fort Frances
Ontario P9A 3N1
(807) 274-3281

*Renfrew
1219 Pembroke St. E.
Pembroke
Ontario K8A 7R8
(613) 735-6866

Simcoe
County Administration
Centre
Midhurst
Ontario L0L 1X0
(705) 726-6587

Stormont, Dundas &
Glengarry
Box 983
Cornwall
Ontario K6H 5V1
(613) 933-2292

Sudbury-Manitoulin
1492 Paris St.
Sudbury
Ontario P3E 3B8
(705) 522-8600

*Temiskaming
Box 1150
Kirkland Lake
Ontario P2N 3M7
(705) 567-9201

Thunder Bay
Box 2027, Station "P"
309 South Court
Thunder Bay
Ontario P7B 5E7
(807) 344-9124

Toronto
33 Charles St. East
Toronto
Ontario M4Y 1R9
(416) 924-4646

Toronto R.C.
26 Maitland St.
Toronto
Ontario M4Y 1C6
(416) 925-6641

Waterloo
355 Charles St. East
Kitchener
Ontario N2G 2P8
(519) 576-0540

**Wellington
Box 1088
55 Delhi St.
Guelph
Ontario N1H 6N3
(519) 824-2410

York
Box 358
85 Eagle St. West
Newmarket
Ontario L3Y 4X7
(416) 731-3150

Jewish Family and
Child Service
of Metropolitan
Toronto
4600 Bathurst Street
6th Floor
Willowdale
Ontario M2R 3V3
(416) 638-7800

Ontario Association of
Children's Aid Societies
2323 Yonge St.
Ste. 505
Toronto
Ontario M4P 2C9
(416) 481-5223

*Name is Family and Children's Service

**Name is Children's Aid Society and Family
Counselling Service

Private Licensed Adoption Agencies

Children's Resource & Consultation
Centre of Ontario
100 St. Clair Avenue West
Toronto, Ontario M4V 1N3
Telephone: (416) 961-3428
Attention: Michael Blugerman

Adoption Agency & Counselling
Service (Ontario)
Box 1333, Postal Station B
Mississauga, Ontario L4Y 4B6
Telephone: (416) 624-0276
Attention: Marg Sinclair

Jewels for Jesus
Adoption Agency
76 Keane Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M9B 2C4
Telephone: (416) 621-2785
Attention: Karen Gibb

Beginnings Counselling and Adoption
Services of Ontario Inc.
414 - 1 Young Street, Ste. 414
Hamilton, Ontario L8N 1T8
Telephone: (416) 528-6665
Attention: Linda Ressler

Latter Day Saints Social Services
2 Dunbloor Road, Suite 304
Islington, Ontario M9A 2E4
Telephone: (416) 232-1082
Attention: Stephen Zobell

St. Clair Region Adoption
Resource Centre
Box 2505, Walkerville Post Office
Windsor, Ontario N8Y 3K3
Telephone: (519) 252-7487
Attention: Lorraine Murphy

Chosen Ones Mission Inc.
R.R. #4
Stouffville, Ontario L0H 1L0
Telephone: (416) 640-4769
Attention: Norene Wardlaw

M.M. Kelly Counselling and
Adoption Agency
96 Sunnidale Road
Barrie, Ontario L4N 1G9
Telephone: (705) 726-5671
Attention: Margaret Kelly

For current information on Licensed Agencies and names of individual Licensees contact the Private Adoption Licensing Clerk, Adoption Unit, Ministry of Community and Social Services, 2nd Floor, 700 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario M5G 1Z6 (416) 965-0544.

Hon. John Sweeney
Minister
Peter Barnes
Deputy Minister



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